THE UPPER SLOPES

MARGARET Sherwood is well known as a novelist, essayist, and poet. For a number of years her work, both prose and poetry, has been a charming feature of the best magazines. The present volume collects various scattered lyrics which will interest diverse tastes, and includes one longer poem which interprets the old tale of Cupid and Psyche, bringing out the spiritual meaning in the poignant mystery of that Greek myth.

By

MARGARET SHERWOOD

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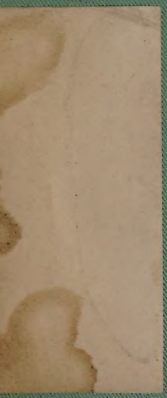
THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER

By Grace Fallow Norton

THE miller's youngest daughter, through the tumbled radiance of the poet's verses, mocks the merely utilitarian and bursts into songs of her delight in the river, in flowers, and the earth and sky.

It is a delightful addition to American poetry, and certainly one of Miss Norton's finest achievements. Its elfin, carefree mood, its grace and rapidity, all unite to make it a joyful thing that poetry-lovers will not soon forget.

Miss Norton's other books, "Little Gray Songs from St. Joseph's," "Roads," and "The Sister of the Wind," have given her an assured and distinguished position among American poets. She is in all her moods first and foremost a lyricist and never more so than in this singing story of "The Miller's Youngest Daughter."



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THE UPPER SLOPES

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BY

MARGARET SHERWOOD

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The poems included in the volume cover a long period of years.

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THE UPPER SLOPES

FERN-LIT the upper slopes with pale-green fire;
The paths shine in the sun;
I will go up to voice my youth's desire,
Though day is almost done.
Too long, alas! too long
In the low valley have I groped my way,
Forlorn of song,
A dalesman old and grey.
Now mist has fallen from my eyes, and I —
Blind to the summits and the wind-swept flights
Of leaf and eagle — see
Against the sky, the far-compelling heights
That beckon me.

They mock along my pathway, crying out
"You are too old to sing!
The chimney corner and the threshold stone
Are for the aged. Let young voices ring
Across their elders' silence, till their shout
Makes youth's great triumph known."
Ah, but the young sing not! Their pointed shoes,

Their curling locks, the broidered clothes they wear,
Make up their care.
The sun-flecked streams serve but a mirror's use.
Late, at a cottage door, at eventide,
When starlight came,
Carolled an aged dame
Of life and love and death,
Of life outlasting breath,
Of great things that abide.
Counting their beads just purchased at the fair,
The young folk there
Smiled at the quavering voice and gave no heed.
Eyes that grow dim
Win to the vision that is sight indeed.
When walls of flesh grow thin
All life may enter in.
'Tis for the old whose eyes are spirit-clear
As Light draws near
That larger life to hymn.

Nay, I will go: ye shall not hold me back!
Ye who have kept me out
With faithless words of doubt
From my old heritage of faith and prayer,

And a diviner air.
Toiling in field or cot,
Ye, with bent backs, forgot
More is the life within than walls of lasting stone.
Your words that lack
All wisdom will I shut from out my ears.
Afar, my spirit hears
The mighty music of the still, small voice
That bids us all rejoice
In everlasting life. As choking dust
Have been the sayings ye have made me hear;
As mist across the eyes
Your long companionship. I will arise,
Toiling aloft to sing upon the peaks.
'Tis he who seeks
That findeth. Far-off heights draw near;
I climb them as I must.

Now, by the passion of all hearts that pray;
By all the longings, all the hopes that are
As pleading, folded hands,
Lifted on high to One both near and far,
To One who understands;
By all the power that hath been the stay

Of tempted souls; by hours of comfort deep
For those who weep;
By old tried faiths and prayers that may not die,
Aloud I cry
They are but blind
Who say no spirit lives beyond the veil
Of things that faint and fail
Where in unceasing change our swift lives come
and go.
Through me as in a tide
Old prayers now flow,
Old passions that abide,
And I, who know,
Cry: They are blind!

I, from these garden-plots with flowers sweet,
From out these meadows with their singing streams,
On halting, weary feet
Follow my dreams
Up the steep mountain path, where I may see
Before I die, the truth long granted me
In days of youth, and long forgot. I climb
Past green-flecked wall of stone, and bleating sheep,
Past beech-trunks grey with time,

My tryst to keep
With God and my own soul. I go to pray:
Grant to the young a hope to bind the hours,
A faith to build upon, nor let them stay
Forgetful, by the warm, sweet harvest flowers,
To lift their eyes on high,
Where sun-swept pastures meet the sky.

THE QUEST

"And He placed at the East of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life."

WEAVING a purple web within the loom,
His mother's mother told one day a tale —
While the gold sunlight touched his hair to gold —
Of the dim glory of a garden where
God's wisdom bloomed in fashion of a tree:
An angel, in a pulsing robe of light,
Guarded the pathway; and a sword of flame,
Gleaming at dawn to eastward, barred the way,
Lest men should pass and pluck the heart of life
From out its secret hiding. Rapt he stood,
Nor heard aught else henceforward; for the air
Murmured about his ears with tongues of flame,
And unseen fingers beckoned.
As he sat
Guarding his sheep in the still grass, a palm
Called through the noonday heat across the sand
And the faint mountain blue beyond the north
Called with the beauty of earth's farthest rim.
By aspen pale or poplar, listening,

He heard the echo stirring in the leaves
Which every tree that puts forth root and bud
Hath from the Tree of Life. Lily and rose,
Remembering the garden where they grew,
Whispered of beauty to make dim the eyes;
Thistle and thorn dreamed with him of the spot
Where they had never grown; but none could tell
The path forgotten, and the ancient wind,
Which sang of having kissed the very leaves,
Sped from him when he prayed it lead the way.

So, betwixt dream and dream, he grew to man,
Driving the plough across the field at dawn,
Folding the flocks at dusk, as others used,
Yet all was faint before him. Word or cry
Smote on his ear as something come too far
For him to catch the meaning. Near and near,
He heard the murmur of the Tree of God.

One day the almond-trees upon the hill
Flushed silently to bloom, and with the spring
A maiden passed. Behold! the tongues of flame
Spoke through her hair and flickered in her eyes.
White foot by foot bathed in the rippling stream,

They sat where green grass marked the waterways
With forehead touched to forehead; and the sun
Flung on them glory of long golden days,
The shadowy night crowned them with shining stars.

Leading his flock one morn along the hill,
Eastward he saw a sword of flame, and paused,
Blinded by glory, stung by very joy
To hunger for the far horizon line.

Her drooping hair crushed dark against his breast,
The woman softly wept: "I bid you stay."
"Ay," he made answer, "in mine ears; and yet
Within my heart of hearts you bid me go";
Then kissed her lips and pondered how to choose —
Fingers that beckoned, or dear hands that clung.
When dawn shone on his face he rose, and passed
Beyond the flat roofs of his kin, beyond
The drooping water-willows, and the paths
The kine had trodden daily to the fields,
Beyond the faint blue mountains to the north —
And men forgot him as he searched for God.

Grey days and green he wandered, asking now
The reeds beside the river, now the folk

Gathered about the door at eventide,
And now the birds that skimmed the upper air
On wide, unwearied wings; but none could send
His yearning feet on their appointed way.
Ruddy the vats at treading of the grape,
Yellow the harvest-fields, and sweet the flowers —
Red lily flushed with color of the sun,
White lily, pure with passion of its flame —
That bloomed beside him: women's words were kind,
Friendly the men who trod the threshing-floors,
Yet none could stay him. Once he saw the light
Of sunset gleaming through a distant tree
On a far mountain, and pressed on through dark
And pathless ways, flint-covered; but he found
Naught save the great green cedar of the north,
With hawk and eagle nesting in its boughs,
And turned again to follow still the joy
Of bleeding feet that question not their goal.

Olive and fig were gathered, and the trees
Bared their brown branches to the greening fields;
Faint with the hope of everlasting spring
Grew the young wheat and the narcissus flower,
When he who walked the inner hills alone

Came one day to a spot, withdrawn, apart,
And, kneeling, worshipped; for upon his eyes
Smote perfect glory man may not behold.
Now the great murmur of the sacred tree
Sang loud within his ears, nor did he heed
The voice that bade him backward lest he die.
Light fell upon his forehead as he stormed
The garden of the secret of the Lord,
Alone, undaunted, met the flashing sword
And died, being glad to die so, in the light.
The woman, who had followed him afar,
Saw not the angel, nor the tree, nor sword,
Nor dreamed the garden; but she saw the face
On which the shadow of the Tree of Life
Had flickered in his passing, and she knew
The beauty that had won his soul to flame —
Nor asked for other wisdom till she died.

INDIAN SUMMER

FAINT blue the distant hills before,
  Yellow the harvest lands behind;
Wayfarers we upon the path
  The thistledown goes out to find.

On naked branch and empty nest,
  The woodland's blended gold and red,
Dim glory lies which autumn shares
  With faces of the newly dead.

Tender this moment of the year
  To eyes that seek and feet that roam;
It is the lifting of the latch,
  A footstep on the flags of home.

Now may the peace of withered grass
  And goldenrod abide with you;
Abide with me — for what is death?
  Fall of a leaf against the blue.

THE OLD TECHNIQUE

THROUGH the wild piping of these later years
  The ancient wind undying murmur brings
Of elder poets' verse, wherein one hears
  The melody at the deep heart of things.

For sun and stars an ordered motion keep;
  The waves in measure break forevermore;
Our lives in rhythmic birth and death and sleep
  Make endless music on the eternal shore.

GREY BIRCHES

We lead the life of desk and book, the life that fails
and strives —
But oh! the little leaves of birch that ripple round
our lives!

We pore upon the shadowed past, where all is said
and done —
But oh! the little leaves of green, translucent in the
sun!

We share the anguish of the world, the half-defeat,
the fear —
But oh! the little leaves of birch that bring the glory
near!

We wait in vain a leader's cry, we fall, exhausted,
weak —
But oh! the little leaves of green that do not need to
speak!

IN MEMORY OF LEO: A YELLOW CAT

If, to your twilight land of dream —
    Persephone, Persephone,
Drifting with all your shadow host —
Dim sunlight comes with sudden gleam,
And you lift veilèd eyes to see
Slip past a little golden ghost,
That wakes a sense of springing flowers,
Of nesting birds, and lambs new-born,
Of spring astir in quickening hours,
And young blades of Demeter's corn;
For joy of that sweet glimpse of sun,
O goddess of unnumbered dead,
Give one soft touch — if only one —
To that uplifted, pleading head!
Whisper some kindly word, to bless
A wistful soul who understands
That life is but one long caress
Of gentle words and gentle hands.

A MOMENT IN FLORENCE

A LADEN cart goes creaking down
The storied street of the fair town
Of Florence, where like jewel set
With subtlest tracery and fret
Of fair-wrought window, carven door,
Or San Michele evermore
Speaks, through the saints' most holy band,
Of toil and beauty, hand in hand.

They trafficked here in corn and wheat;
Here thousands came, with praying feet,
For healing of the gracious face
Of her who blessed the market-place.
They fashioned this immortal shrine
To keep the week-day task divine;
Makers of doublets and of shoes
Claimed the high speech that artists use;
Then mason, smith, and carpenter
Bade sculptors fashion forth for her
Enshrined within — as still is shown —
Orcagna's miracle of stone,

Saints haloed, living now as then,
The holy ones who walk with men:
So carven lips should speak their praise
For nights of peace and busy days,
Making for them unceasing prayer —
Encompassed round by those aware —
That gracious hands might still assoil
The stains of traffic and of toil.
Of faith and art the golden days
When merchandise was prayer and praise,
And merchant princes vied to dower,
With training, young of gift and power,
Making the lilied city shine.
Glory of shapen curve and line
Spoke inmost truth, and art was whole —
Beauty of body and of soul.

The gold dust of November days
Gleams down the street in shining rays;
The mules' bells tinkle through the beat
Of immemorial hasting feet.
The carter's boy looks out upon
Saint Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Saint Stephen, in whose youthful face,

Dawns, in grey stone, the martyr's grace;
Saint George, in all his armor drest,
Saint James, Saint Philip, and the rest —
Saint after saint, in glory met,
Saint after saint, forever set
Above the city's toil and stir,
Wrought by the artist-worshipper,
Niche after niche, the marble still
With youthful heart and mind a-thrill
Of those who had — perchance has he —
Genius of Tuscan Italy.

The carter's boy looks out and sees
The tourists stand by twos and threes,
Reading how statue number one
In fourteen hundred odd was done
By young Ghiberti; statue four
In fourteen hundred ten and more
By Donatello; point to show
Saint Thomas by Verrocchio,
Striving with busy mind to grasp
That beauty, safe within his clasp,
Woven within of subtlest mesh,
Bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh,

Aquiver in his heart, alive —
The tourist turns to statue five.

Stretched out upon the load of sand,
Shading his eyes with lifted hand,
Along the Stocking Makers' Street,
Which, as of old, goes on to meet
Façade and campanile, dome,
Where loveliness has lasting home,
The carter's boy goes dreaming on
Of Christ, Saint Thomas, and Saint John.

Had he his chance, what might he do
To set his kind a-praising too?

THE MATERIALISTS

In the green world of winds and rains
  The tyrants of this age
Have bound the human soul in chains
  Within an iron cage.

And loud through earth's highways they flout,
  With strident voices call:
"There is no sky. The sun is out!
  The prison cell is all!"

Though they shut out with molten bars
  Meadow and sky and sea;
Oh, break them open to the stars,
  And let the soul go free!

SIDNEY'S APOLOGIE FOR POETRIE

Reading, I seem to hearken one who sings
  A many-cadenced song, divinely wrought
In nobly-measured prose, which subtly brings
  The music of Elizabethan thought.

A CHOICE

I HEED not him who science sings,
Busy with outer shows of things,
Mistaking earth and air and sea
For ultimate reality,
Nor knowing them the changing dress
Where spirit puts on loveliness.
Philosophy I may not boast,
Where endlessly ghost chases ghost
Too swiftly o'er the universe
For this, my human-hearted verse.
Of history so much I choose
As a diviner art may use
To quicken faith in faltering soul.
Here, part is greater than the whole!
All ugly deeds I banish thus
To dwell with night in Erebus.
What need have we of ancient crimes
Within whose ears the music chimes
That wins the souls of men to run
A nobler race than they have done?

Of poetry be mine to tell,
Where Truth, which aye unseen doth dwell
Beyond the sight and ear of men,
Is fashioned fair for human ken,
In images so radiant-fair
Our eyes may see and know her there.
Unending converse shall be mine
With those whose glorious faces shine
From out the dark, as shines a star,
Steadfast forever, and afar.
Antigone's sweet sacrifice,
The love in young Alcestis' eyes,
The spirit-strife of Lancelot,
And Hamlet's thought escape me not.
For moments come, when I unloose
Latchets of my unworthy shoes
Where Shakespeare's soul, in godlike strife,
Fights on the far frontier of life
To win one inch for you and me
From all-surrounding mystery;
Where very inspiration broods
In the young Keats' immortal moods;
Where Shelley, winged all rainbow-bright,
Speeds toward the far-off gates of light;

Where Browning scorns, in challenge fine,
Who fail to find this life divine.

Less high aspiring hope I spurn,
Praying that still within me burn
Some little spark of sacred fire,
That I may share their large desire
Who wrought, for your delight and mine,
Beauty eternal and divine,
In poetry, the "creed of creeds,"
Where noble words tell noble deeds.

THY TABLE

I SEEK thy table, Lord,
  To break my bread with thee;
Yet still afar, past hill and star
  It vanishes from me.

Though folk along the way
  Call it an idle dream,
By sea and sedge, at earth's faint edge,
  Ever I see it gleam.

There thy beloved are,
  Close gathered, soul to soul;
And there thy face, in hallowed space,
  Shines as my distant goal.

Late, weary and forspent,
  I near the holy spot,
Where they are met, thy table set,
  But still I find thee not.

They pledge their fellowship
  In words that are not thine;

Though here they sup, with sacred cup,
  Not this thy bread and wine.

Ah, Lord, the nations yearn
  To gather at thy feet;
Thou bidst to feast both great and least
  With simple words and sweet.

Our faith — that love enfold
  The living and the dead;
Our creed — a prayer that thou be there
  To share the wine and bread.

THE SACRIFICE

"THINE altar empty, and its fires dead?
O man, arise
And offer up thine evening sacrifice,
Or thy soul dies."

I turned and said,
"God hath withdrawn himself, or is not. I,
To save my soul alive, disdain to lie."

"But if thy praying neighbor look and see
Thine altar smokeless, will not also he
Doubt and be damned? Go, let thy fires burn:
God may return;
Or, if he come not, dare let no man know."

"Nay, nay, not so!
Not to save all the world from dying I
Would dare to lie."

Alone, alone
In the cold ashes on my altar stone

I bowed my head.
"O Thou who art the utter truth, with grief
I bring an offering of unbelief,
My old faith dead.
Here on this stone whose flames have flickered out
I lay, in sad sincerity, my doubt.
All that I have I bring Thee, Lord, arise
And let thy flame consume this sacrifice!"

THE CREED OF CHRIST

Above unnumbered battle-fields
For help cries out the Earth;
Her wise, in pulpit and in press,
Discuss the Virgin Birth.

Now busy tongue and pen make haste,
Forgetful of our Lord,
To slay with words, as men in war
Slay with the spear or sword.

The Don Quixotes of our day —
They pierce abstractions through,
And tilt against the windmill sails
Of dogma old and new.

Yet all our lives, from birth to death,
Through good or evil done,
Will we or no, before us floats
The gentle face of One

Whose teaching was divinely clear,
Divinely hard to live;

Who said: "Love thou thine enemy,
And, when man sins, forgive."

So far ahead, so long to reach
This faith of love and deed,
That men, to keep from listening,
Wove subtle creed on creed,

Vast systems of required faith,
Forbidden, and the rest,
Lest we should find how hard it is
To love one's neighbor best.

O Christ, who showed the holy way
To our unwilling eyes,
Now grant us thy simplicity
Of faith in sacrifice.

Brush Thou away all woven webs
And let our blind eyes see,
Clear as a shining star ahead
Thy "Love thine enemy."

MY SOUL

"SAVE now thy soul," the Preacher saith,
"From doom of everlasting death!"

But what is the path of my soul,
And where shall I find its face?
Glimpses, vanishing, rare,
Moments dim and divine,
The farthest verge of the sea,
Or blue of the distant hills,
Make me aware of my soul.
It flashes upon my ken
From a woman's suffering mouth,
Or the quivering lips of a child,
Through the eyes of the martyr race
Of beasts that serve our need,
Patient, unquestioning, hurt.
When I share the anguish of life
Claiming all pain for my own,
I know through this torment of birth,
The travail of coming to be,
The quickening life of the soul.

It comes in the flash of the sun
Or the twilit tops of the trees;
In the cheep of the nesting birds;
I hear its light footfall
In the windy rustle of leaves,
The murmur of waves on the shore;
The beauty and music of earth
Are but the garments it wears.

Then, ah! the charmèd days
When it comes to abide with me,
And I walk with my soul alone,
Holy, sequestered, apart;
In the autumn-tide of the year
When the spirit emerges to sight
More visible far than the flesh,
And the soul of the world turns brown,
Dim red and wondrous blue
In the haze-haunted distance of earth.
Silent — I listen then
And hear the great music of all
Uncontradicted, divine,
While thoughts that are greater than I
Break grandly upon my shores,

And words that I never knew,
Of wisdom beyond my ken,
Murmur like wind on my lips.
It will not let me alone,
Questioning, beckoning far.
Forever beyond my reach,
Vaster than dream or desire,
Thou walkest with me, my soul.
Pace for pace with my feet,
My weary feet of clay,
Thy spirit footsteps fall.
So I gird my mortal loins,
And I follow afar my soul,
Past steep and windy height
To reach the trail of the stars.

BEYOND

In endless, unavailing quest
Walking alone
Have I toiled down the ways of thought,
Nor peace, nor rest
Have found, or sought,
Afoot by day, pillowed on stone.

Yet love hath slipped a hand in mine,
Striving to say
The secret which my ceaseless tread
Would fain divine;
Wise as the dead,
Sorrow hath joined me on the way.

As I go on, unsatisfied,
Companions sweet
Share step by step my wayfaring;
Death, tender-eyed,
Gentle as spring,
And friendship with unwearied feet.

Yet still this passion of desire,
Consuming me,
Through knowledge and through love and death,
Burns, like still fire,
In every breath,
To win the spirit's life in Thee.

TIDE

My soul forever angrily
Lashes the narrow bounds of me,
In storm of longing and of prayer
Tossed high into the darkening air
With roar of wonder unsubdued.
Waves in unending multitude
Beat on with yearning unfulfilled;
Searching through pool and cleft a way,
Through swift foam-flower and rainbow spray,
Chafing in ceaseless swirl and fret
To win the shore unwandered yet.
Impatient of the barrier,
It feels within the reach and stir
Of greater tides than it may know,
The tides that mark the ebb and flow
Of life that hath no mete nor bound.
Deep voices call with solemn sound.
The utmost star of endless space
Bids it find out her dwelling-place.
A voice beyond the utmost star,
More potent, summons yet more far.

Nor may this onward tide of quest
Ripple into enduring rest,
Until it batter down for me
These walls that hide eternity.

AFTER

My dust upon the wind is blown
  Like drifting sand;
Yet, living there beside God's throne,
  My old prayers stand.

Lifeless and cold the senseless clay
  That bore my name;
Yet there the faith I dared not say
  Burns up like flame.

When flesh and blood made up my part
  How could I see
That hope within my inmost heart
  Was all of me?

THE MASK

So long I wore a mask, in fear
  To let my soul be known,
Though neighbor, friend, and kin draw near,
  Unmasked, I walk alone.

PERSONALITY

I SHALL rejoice to be free at the last,
Glad to be rid of my body and bone;
To follow the trail of the winds that have passed,
To take the old paths of the birds that have flown;
Glad to escape from my name and desire,
Glad to escape from my joy and my pain;
Free to leap up in the flame of the fire,
To blow with the gale and beat down with the rain:
Out of the bounds of myself I shall sweep,
Greater than earth or the widening sky;
Exultingly into the infinite leap,
Glad to be rid of me — *I!*

FAITH, THE BUGLER

Over the hill-tops, long ago,
With silvery cry, or high, or low,
Ever there floated a bugle call.
Quick grew our steps by meadow or wall;
Little we heeded the stones in the way,
For ever and aye did the bugler play;
The steep grew easy, the darkness bright;
In grey of dawning, by dim starlight,
Onward we trudged with daring new
As, far or nearer, the player blew —
Blew courage into the fainting soul,
Such courage that the distant goal —
So potent was the music sweet —
Already seemed beneath our feet.

Where, in what meadow, stretched out in the sun,
Lies sleeping the bugler whose music is done?

Waken, O player, and call once more!
For doubt stalks behind us, and fear before;

Retreat is whispered on every side
From bush and hill where deserters hide.
Lost are we, and weary, and find no track;
O maker of music, come back, come back!
Grant us to hear, though far and faint,
The chiding bugle's high complaint,
Summoning stragglers back to the line.
O'er hill and valley, thou player divine,
To the winds of heaven sound, loud and free,
That call, whose cadence is victory.

THE PRESENT HOUR

I, WHO am God, being Love,
Flowing through all the universe of space,
Within, above,
Petal and star obedient to my will;
Forever present, though time veil my face,
In struggling hearts, though alway baffled, still
From all eternity a white desire,
An upward leaping flame of fire —
At all mankind waxed wroth.

I, who had granted them joy for growth,
Sorrow and pain whereby to find their way,
Saw them betray
The higher hope wherein their race had birth.
The sons of God went crawling close to earth,
Forgot the upward urge, crept down the slope
Whereon I bade them climb; in lust and greed
Betrayed the higher need;
Forgot their fellows, leaving them to groan
While each man sought his own,
Broken and scattered, who had held high aim

Of being one in me. Then, near and far
Hot gleamed my rage, from star to molten star,
A universe in my white wrath aflame.

. . . . . .

Alone, alone, for wrath is isolation, I
Quivered through earth and air and sea and sky,
Casting off man, knowing no hope for him.
Then my might waxèd dim,
And mine omnipotence within me strove,
Shot through with sudden dread:
Were I not less than God in being less than Love?

Should Love grow faint and frail
The vast of things would crumble; world by world
And sun by sun, in trembling ruin hurled
A universe lie dead.

Sudden my Godhead swept exulting back;
My very self their lack,
Breath of my being is the human wail.
Enduring passion of creative power,
I, in the creatures of an hour,
Hope, bear, believe, endure, and may not fail.

. . . . . .

I bend mine ear
Once more above the utter need of men,
Striving to hear,
As erst from all eternity, again
The whispers faint that syllable my name.

From out a world of broken faith and promises
forgot, there came
Even now the word which sayeth all things, Love;
The very word a prayer,
The word a golden stair,
Whereon the stumbling heart of man climbs to my
heart above.

NATURE, IN HER DEPTHS

Relentlessly working,
Creating, up-climbing,
She makes us, she spurns us, she casts us away.
White her green earth with the bones of us crumbling,
Turbid the winds with the dust that was men,
Race after race, alive, disappearing.
Within her a power, intensity, yearning
In passion of flame
Swirling, mounting, aspiring;
She knows she is greater than aught she has fashioned;
Deep, deep down her mud stirs to something yet higher;
The brute in her strives to escape from itself.
In this quiver, this anguish, this travail of birth,
No race comes to being expressing the spirit,
Revealing her deepest,
None, telling the depth and the height of her grasp.
Soul stirring, fine impulse
Run quivering through her,

But the souls she casts upward
Get caught in the meshes and tangle of flesh.
Away with their bodies! —
This terrible weaving,
This fearful unravelling
Of that she hath knit.
It was wrong, it fell short of her measure of vision;
Dropt stitches, lost thread, she unravels again.
Unravels the races,
Unweaves tribes and nations,
Still striving, still struggling,
Still yearning to fashion
But one — will make known her profoundest sweet
purpose,
Will go forth to work in the light of the soul.

Lo, I will undo them, my races of men,
Till the soul shall unfold from the husks that
enmesh it,
Go free and unfettered, make known my deep plan.

QUATRAINS

APPROACH

MANY the gates that guard the Holy Place
Whereby the well-beloved may enter in;
The Gate of Sorrow opens on His Face;
The Gate of Joy: the iron Gate of Sin.

CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY AT WELLESLEY FEBRUARY 19, 1919

CHILDLIKE, Promethean, immortal, one
Bearing the sacred fire among us came.
Lo, the spent runner greets those still to run!
From youthful face to face kindles white flame.

SOLDIERS

BLINDED and rent and torn in warring lands,
Oh, know you not a fiercer pain may be
In anguish of unmutilated hands,
In anguish of the eyes that still may see?

THE SUN

GREEN, sun-warmed leaf and crimson-petalled rose
Share the deep secret of swift passing breath;
Consuming flame to fairest beauty grows.
And life is kindled by impassioned death.

GLEAMS

Long years I've lived through, fifty to a day,
Of plodding work, with now a bit of play.
What has it come to? Was it worth the pain,
The lingering toil, the problematic gain?
Hard study to find out, and little found,
Grinding the mill wherein myself am ground.
Well had my grain of dust been blown apace,
Blown quite away in the abyss of space,
But for those moments, few, divine, and rare,
Of pure creative joy, wherein you share
The primal rapture, fashioning some bit
Of loveliness, to meet your dream of it.
When space and time open and let you free
To skim the confines of infinity.
The gathered years turn flame; a second brings
The whole intense significance of things
In that white heat; eternity of bliss
Must be some instant's glorious flash like this.
Worth the long pain of years? For one or two
I'd live another toiling lifetime through.

TO A QUAKERESS

Ours this sequestered nook,
Solitude of grass and book,
Where, of dappled sun and shade,
For us twain a world is made,
Myriad tints of living green
Lending us a leafy screen.
Distant seems the lazy beat
Of slow footsteps on the street;
At our feet two kittens play,
Stealing where the grasses sway
In the sun-warmed winds of June
Through the perfect afternoon:
While the wood-thrush from the hill
Joyous sings, and then is still;
While tall lilies, far and white,
Visible to spirit's sight,
Disembodied come to meet —
Soul to soul in fragrance sweet.

Win me to your Quaker mood:
Peaceful thoughts that softly brood

Over secret, precious things;
Lofty thoughts, with slow, strong wings,
Beating high the heaven's blue.
Make me wise to know with you
Blessed are the feet that pass
Through their own familiar grass;
Ears that hear the summer rain
Gently falling on the pane;
Eyes that see, day after day,
Shadows fall the selfsame way.
Lend to me your spirit's peace
Wherein restless voices cease.
Share with me the soul's clear light
Making all your body bright,
As when sunshine's self is seen
In the leaves' translucent green.
Let your quick sense touch my ear
To its fineness, you who hear
Leaf and stem grow silently.
Yours the life of flower and tree,
Birds and butterfly are kin.
Ah, I pray you, let me in,
Fellowship that nowhere ends,
Great society of Friends!

TO MRS. T——R

SYRACUSE, SICILY, FEBRUARY, 1923

I CANNOT compass Heaven with a thought
As many dare; they tell us it is peace
And endless quiet; others are who say
It is enduring struggle of the soul
In aspiration, hope, perchance defeat,
Up the long spiral back to hope again.
Now am I very weary of men's dreams
Of future life; the thought of endless rest
Disquiets me; my fighting spirit spurns
The doom of long quiescence, yet the thought
Of endless struggle stings to suffering
My soul which fights with hope of end and pause;
Nor have men dreamed a dream of life beyond
That I can dream with them — and yet, and yet
Fain would I think there are green meadows still
To tread upon the heights, with blue beyond,
The past beneath one's feet, that, strolling there,
By ancient doorways, I might meet perchance
With some new friend wayfaring, and that we,
Filling our hands with iris, violet,

Daisy, anemone, and marigold,
Might walk through yet unblossomed asphodel,
In delicate clear air beside the sea —
A shepherd's pipe, the tinkle of a bell
Breaking the silence — and might talk of all
The human soul has dreamed and done, of what
By purest spirits' reach it has divined,
And what has fashioned — moulded out of clay,
Sculptured in stone, or wrought in color, line,
On wall or canvas, set to melody
Of subtlest words to shadow forth its thought.
Perhaps beside some hedge of rosemary
We might sit down and talk of the old myths
Wrought out in beauty that the world might see;
Or, strolling further, on the storied heights,
Pass softly by some immemorial shrine
Within a cave, a-quiver yet with prayers
That here have risen to the ancient Ge,
Demeter, and to many another god,
And now to the Madonna. Thus from change
To change, beauty to greater beauty, life
Moves on forever, opening like a flower;
Insight grows greater insight, and we pause
Breathless with wonder what a day may bring.

Home by the age-long trodden path we go
To fashion something, with a vision new,
Think of new friends, new thresholds yet to cross
— And so I can imagine Paradise.

SONNETS

LOVE'S BLINDNESS

As weary pilgrim starts in sad surprise
At stain and fissure and unsightly rent
Disfiguring each tower and battlement
Of the white city of his dreams — then tries
To hide his grief, when lo, in fear it dies
Upon the temple's threshold: reverent
He straight forgets his disillusionment,
Bowed at the altar with prayer-blinded eyes.

So I, beloved, think not of one flaw
Or imperfection that I thought I saw
When first I knew thee, ere I found my way
Into thy soul, that sacramental day,
The holiest of holies, where with awe
Veiling mine eyelids, I still kneel to pray.

VICTORY

How long, O Lord, shall this mine enemy
Triumph against me on the battle-field?
Lo, he hath broken both my sword and shield,

Trampled my colors and sore wounded me.
I lift my hot, stained, weary hands to Thee
  In one last prayer for succor ere I yield.
  My God, I am defeated! Come and wield
For me the sword, and gain my victory.

O Knight of God! Call not for help, but rise
  From out the dust of thy last overthrow,
    Crying out "Triumph!" though thy lips be wan.
To him alone is battle, who defies
  His own proved weakness, brave enough to know
    His only victory is — fighting on!

MICHELANGELO'S "ADAM"
IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Upon a hill-side all alone he lies,
Waiting the spirit that shall give him birth;
There is no help in all the wind-blown earth,
There is no help in all the empty skies,
For him who vainly struggles on to rise;
For see! God's hand is just beyond his grasp,
And all the strength his fingers long to clasp
He cannot reach, save with his longing eyes.

Touch him, O God! and let the breath divine
Kindle his life; or take thine hand away,
Nor mock him with the vain hope that he can
Walk upright in a strength not his, but Thine.
Yet hush! Life quivers down the limbs of clay!
Can waiting for God's touch create a man?

TWO LOVERS
(1303)

WHERE the swift ripples of the Adige fret
Verona's ancient walls of crumbling stone;
By delicate arch, with leaf and flower sown,
Window and door, with carven marble set,
Long, long ago, two loveliest faces met:
He who divinely walked the earth alone
Paused, where in flickering shade of tracery shone
The passion-stormèd eyes of Juliet.

To Dante's poet heart she made swift cry:
"Ah, Romeo is banished far from me!
Save I may touch his lip, his hand, I die!"
Then the grim lines that love and faith had wrought
Trembled to tenderness: "Child, there is naught
Save that we may not either touch nor see."

ON A SNAP-SHOT TAKEN AT DELPHI IN 1909

It hangs upon my study wall
  Where any one may see —
A picture of a mountain side,
  An old grey olive-tree:

A tramp of feet, a cracking whip,
  And pacing asses slow;
The road around Parnassus —
  I took it, long ago!

Above, about the mountain-top,
  Circle the eagles' wings;
And halfway up, a bird or nymph
  Ecstatically sings.

The road around Parnassus —
  Sometimes a faun astray,
The footsteps of a dancing kid,
  Pan, who has lost his way —

And still, with eyes upon the earth,
  I trudge the beaten track;
From tired arm to shoulder bent
  I shift my heavy pack.

Twice twenty weary years I've trod
  In weather foul or fair
The road around the Muses' hill
  And am not anywhere.

. . . . . .

O children, trooping on the road,
  With dusty, well-trained feet,
Break ranks and scamper up the hill!
  Follow the piping sweet!

Fling wide your books of forms and rules!
  Apollo and the nine
E'en now on some wild trail above
  Make melody divine.

And, as you run, be warned by me;
  Listen, but do not stop:
The road around Parnassus
  Will never reach the top!

DECEMBER IN BERMUDA

Across the sea, across the sea
I found my childhood waiting me
  — Lost, lost so many years gone by!
It came in touch of sweet spring air
On brow and wrist and lifted hair,
  In quickening pulse and eye.

I thought these bluebirds all had fled;
I thought these roses all were dead
  — The quaint red blooms my childhood knew;
What land is this of swift, bright wings,
Where wait all earth's forgotten springs,
  And all one's dreams come true?

These feet that will not let me rest
— Brown wing or red means ceaseless quest —
  I thought they wearied long ago!
By grassy slope they have their will;
Bright shore or solemn cedarn hill
  They wander to and fro.

The rippling water, fresh and sweet,
Stings throat and arm and eager feet,
  While, on the shifting track,
In fretted shadows o'er the strand
Where clear waves wash the golden sand,
  Old, happy hours come back.

Set in an April sea of green
And blue, with sunlight's flash between,
  Sequestered far it lies;
Strange blossoms gleam on trees unknown;
New fragrances with old are blown
  — This may be Paradise!

ON LAKE LEMAN

SAIL high, O gull, beat down the air!
Strive upward, like a white-winged prayer!

It must be glorious to fly
Past the white peaks that touch the sky
Where the last sunbeams come to die.

It must be glorious to fly
Steadfast and slow
And only know
That earth is past, and heaven is high.

THE PACK ANIMALS OF SICILY

We the down-trodden
Pack bearers of Sicily
To what gods soever
May bend down to listen
Raise now our prayer.

Altars have risen,
Altars have fallen
In this our island;
All have availed not.
Shrine upon shrine to the goddess Diana,
Pitiless beauty, goddess of chase.
God of Phœnician, Carthaginian, Roman,
God of the Saracen,
God of the Norman,
The Christian God.
None have had mercy,
Blind are they, sightless
That heed not our woe?
Out of the dark of forgotten far ages
All the old cruelty lingereth yet.

Bearers of burdens
From time immemorial
All human ways companioned have we;
Patient and dumb, overladen and goaded,
Lashed up the steep places,
With backs sore and bleeding
Re-loaded again.
On stony ways where we gain not a footing
Stumbling we fall and we rise to the lash.
Standing here trembling
Tortured and crippled and gasping for breath,
We challenge the Christian —
His faith then of mercy
Hath it proved false?

One of our race hath watched by the manger,
Holiest manger where Christ-child hath lain.
Mercy was born there with Christ in the manger,
Mercy for man and compassion for beast.
One of our race hath borne him as an infant
Down into Egypt, fugitive sweet;
One hath borne him, with the waving of branches
Into Jerusalem, scourging and torture,
Suffering borne for sufferers all.

We who may speak not, we who may cry not
Raise now to heaven our agonized eyes.
If there be mercy, if there be pity, if Christ hath
spoken
Have mercy on us.

ONE

I WATCH for sunlit sails beside
  The headland facing me;
Grey sails slip past and softly glide
  Across a greyer sea.

Like flakes of cloud, all shadow dim
  They pass and fade, but one
That vanishes at wide earth's brim
  Catches a gleam of sun.

CONQUEST

Up, for the march has begun!
Forward and onward the press!
Swift move the hurrying ranks,
Emerald file after file,
Grasses and reeds of the marsh,
Grasses of meadow and hill,
Clover and buttercup blooms
Led by the dominant wind.
Many-voiced the acclaim
From myriad, murmuring leaves
Of poplar and maple astir.
Loud is the drum of the bee;
Strong is the music and sweet
Pouring from jubilant throats
Of sparrow and glad bob-o-link.
Bright are the pennons that wave
Far in the radiant air,
Gold of the brave fleur-de-lis
Set in long banners of green,

On to the conquest we move,
An irresistible host,
Thrilled by a single desire —
The kingdom of beauty is won!

A SIGN

I WALK with the goldenrod
  In secret places sown,
A very finger of God
  Pointing beyond the known,

Beckoning out afar
  The ultimate open way,
Leading past star and star
  To the hearts of men — who pray.

THE HERMIT THRUSH

WHERE inmost forest beckons me to rest
I pause to wonder, in the solemn hush,
How won Sir Galahad the Holy Quest
Who never listened to the hermit thrush?

JUNE

I

GREEN the familiar way I walked with you
Where fragrant sunshine on our faces fell;
Softly we trod together, nor could tell
It led to fields eternal, for the blue
Met still the old horizon, and we knew
Lilac and rose and briar passing well;
Dreamed not that buttercup was asphodel,
Nor on what awful brink the violets grew.

No path I found returning: here I bide
Afar from sound of beating storm and rain,
In June's unfading sunlight; and the grass
Sways in immortal breezes. Time nor tide
Can dim these meadows where my footsteps pass
— Held ever to the heart of love and pain.

II

With shadow for the glory of your eyes
And silence for your footstep, methought all
Of life went trembling dustward with the fall

Of withered rose leaves; yet, with dumb surprise,
In my forgiven foe I saw you rise.
Through every cry of pain I hear you call,
And, when the sunlight touches yon grey wall
Your kiss again upon my forehead lies.

Once were you but a part of my green earth,
Lover and friend, with whom my feet kept pace,
Who shared my wonder, gave back mirth for mirth.
Now is naught else in all the vast of space:
Grown mighty through some unimagined birth,
Lo, Life and Love and Death all wear your face!

III

On the green hill the long-forgotten dead
Guarded our tryst beside the crumbling wall;
Debating life, we watched leaf shadows fall
On springing grass, from hoary branches shed,
On grass by vine and blossom garlanded;
Heard bob-o-link and sweet song-sparrow call
Where moss and lichen immemorial
Enfold the sleepers close at foot and head.

Strange visitants beside the sod we met, —
Quick with the roots of fern and violet:

Eternity put off her mask of time,
And Death the mask of tears wherewith she hides
The shining of her face, and walked sublime
The life of life wherein Love's self abides.

IV

The hollow of an ancient wood, a throng
Of dusky hemlocks shading noon to night,
Save where sun-kindled fern and beech leaves light
Pale fires of green afar; adown the long
Dim solitudes we walk, while, sweet and strong,
Comes sudden music after sudden flight.
From wind-scarred tree-tops, hidden from our sight,
The hermit thrush pours forth immortal song.

O Love, take thou this voice and sing to me
In the sequestered places of my soul.
Thy very self it is; its accent thine.
Through mingled joy and pain the full notes roll
In upward cadence reaching things divine:
Learn thou its passion; win its victory.

V

Sleeping, I dreamed of life, and with swift feet
Came many to interpret, all arrayed

In opal-tinted garments: Joy, afraid
Of her own face; Hope, stepping to the beat
Of primal heart-throbs; yet could none repeat
The meaning. While with wistful eyes they stayed
One robed in flame drew near: Love came and made
The dream more bitter and the dream more sweet.

Vision and seer faded into one.
With asking lips like mine, about me trod
In breaking light from neither star nor sun
False soothsayers, until, beyond their strife,
Sorrow came smiling from the heart of God,
And led me with her to the heart of life.

VI

Faintly along this rock-strewn granite way
By crag and cliff, where waves unceasing roll,
I am aware, myself hath had control
In heaping high these boulders, lichen-grey,
In tossing far the blinding salt sea spray.
Though hard and steep the path, my very soul
Hath fashioned it, and put afar the goal
Where it may win the self-set prize one day.

O mighty Self, toward whom I dimly grope,
Foreknowledge win I, through thy secret voice,
Share thy large will, and know thy gift divine,
Of poignant grief to me, as will of mine.
Through this vast sorrow, one great moment's
choice,
Blindly I falter toward immortal hope.

IN MEMORIAM

Sophie Jewett

By still lake shore, or oak wood sere,
One time there walked a lady here
In garments green, whose ripples still
Blend with the grass of field and hill.
Through the dim blue of autumn haze,
Through quickening spring's enchanted days,
Erect, serene, she came and went
On her high task of beauty bent.
For us who knew, nor can forget,
The echoes of her laughter yet
Make sudden music in the halls.
For aye these academic walls
Give back that cadenced voice that reads
Poetic tale of knightly deeds,
Her head thrown back in swift-born pride
In one who for his faith had died;
A sudden splendor in her eyes
At finding act of sacrifice.

Earth had her merriment and tears,
Her fine resolve, her quick-stung fears

Of crawling selfishness and sin,
Her quicker faith that good shall win.
This brown world bringing joy and pain
In days of gold, in lashing rain,
Through all its myriad-minded strife
She loved with warmth of human life,
Revelled in every line and hue
Of beauty sea and forest knew.

Sharing her sorrow and her mirth,
We knew her part of blessed earth,
Yet knew she lived, eternally,
The soul's hid life one may not see.
Withdrawn, apart, by night and day,
Her footsteps climbed the holy way,
Up heavenly hills of longing, where
The spirit takes the road of prayer.

Nor dare we doubt that she, who then
Trod the far world beyond our ken,
Walks now, unseen, this earth of ours,
Aware, as once, of sun-touched flowers,
And hylas' plaintive cries, that bring
The pain and peace of earliest spring;

Of June's sweet fragrances, and all
The subtle loveliness of Fall.
In gentle rain, in brightening air,
Lo, she is here, and everywhere!
Nearer than sight, or whispered word,
Yet ours, though untouched, unheard,
As eager as of old to share
The beauty that one may not bear,
So fine its poignancy of joy;
Still busy in her old employ
Of poetry, verse finely wrought
That sets to music noble thought.

One had to seek her then, but see!
Forever waits she silently
Where bitter need or trouble calls.
Alway I hear her light foot-falls
In crowded streets, where hunger waits
At its unnumbered, swarming gates;
And step by step with human ill
Her healing footsteps follow still.
Whenever sudden anguish cries
I see the sweetness of her eyes,
Where quivering shades of sorrow blend
With vision of the perfect end.

HALFWAY

Ah, they who die die not alone;
  With your last breath,
Like a candle-flame my life was blown
  By the wind of death.

My eyelids closed with yours on all
  Vision may bring;
The golden beauty of the fall,
  The green of spring.

Unless you listen, can I hear
  The hylas cry?
No thrush's song may reach your ear,
  And deaf am I.

For not alone you crossed the blue
  That far space fills;
I followed, and I walk with you
  On heavenly hills.

TO ——

I FOLLOW down earth's dusty ways,
And out from star to star,
But you are fleet, your tireless feet
Speed all too far, too far.

I've trod the far horizon's rim
And searched the utmost blue;
Nor star dust dim, nor Saturn's rim
Reveals a trace of you.

VISION

As each slipped from the place
Where all had walked with me,
I, on each passing face,
Saw immortality.

FAITH

THAT life shall aye endure,
Beyond the passing breath,
I know no proof secure,
Save death.

LOST

O BEAUTIFUL souls of my dead, draw near,
For this world of sense has faded and fled.
Naught can I see, or feel, or hear
Save my beautiful dead.

Now you who have vanished went not alone;
You have beckoned me with you to some far place;
'Tis between the two worlds that I search for my own,
Adrift in space.

I have lost my way to that world and this,
And my soul goes crying along your track;
Oh, lead me where your far threshold is,
Or bring me back!

THE ANSWER

Over the tea-cups in the afternoon
Ensconced in easy chairs they chatter on,
Talking of this and that: What of the strike?
And is the soul immortal? In the game
Of Yale with Harvard, who were victors? Ah,
These hobble skirts are ugly! Yes, 'tis true
Science would seem to teach the opposite,
Eschew all fancies, and admit for faith
But that which eye and ear can prove; exact,
And scrupulous; so careful of the truth!
Religion always had a way, you know,
Of jumping at conclusions. Science says
The soul is not immortal. Proof, you say?
They never say a word, these scientists,
They cannot prove. Sad, but we have this life,
With joys enough of body, duties too,
And comfort of the kettle on the hearth.
'Tis a cold winter; stocks are high again —
— So in mine ears the music of my kind.

From these who tread the daily paths with me,
Whose voices seem to come from very far,

I turn to you, beloved dead, who speak
At noonday, at the coming of the stars,
With clearest voices, breaking through the bounds
Of time, and space, and all earth's passing show.
How potent are the dead! Deep-awed I stand
Before my soul which mingles now with them
Awful, aware, encompassing my life.
In the old days when, step by step, your feet
Paced the dear common ways of earth with mine,
Your touch thrilled through me; word and thought
alike
Felt ever your compelling power, but now,
More sweet and piercing, you have entered in
To my heart's core, and are a part of me.
Dear is the touch of hand on clasping hand
Of one beloved; dear is lip to lip;
Yet far is closest clasp of breast to breast
Of souls made separate by breathing flesh;
Then only near, when neither sight, nor touch
Of groping hand may find. "Flesh of my flesh"
Is mightier distance than of pole to pole.
There is no nearness save of spirit's reach
To spirit.

Now, by twilight paths of home,
Through pasture lands of fern and juniper,
I ever walk with my beloved dead.
Thoughts lovelier than my own arise in me,
More gracious hopes, assurances beyond
All my frail faith could reach. When sunset bars
Of crimson lie along the western sky,
Over the green hill or the hill of snow,
Your souls within me move my lips to prayer,
And, face to face, I know eternity.

Have they who question whether death end all,
Have they no dead?

HOME

THE DOORWAY

If oftentimes by my closed door I stand,
Biding its mystery with indrawn breath —
Lo, what my wonder, when I lay my hand
Upon the latch of thy great door, O Death!

THE HOUSE

When my own eyes serve but to prison me,
I cry upon my inmost soul to tell
Near what great city that I may not see
Stands the low hut of clay wherein I dwell.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

About my plot of green great planets swing,
Golden in golden eve or morning grey;
My lowly roof-tree touches Saturn's ring,
And the vast splendor of the Milky Way.

NEIGHBORS

Gathered about the doorways, near and far,
At eventide they talk with nods and smiles;
Above the elm, my nearest neighbor star
Greets me across some fifteen trillion miles.

THE APPLE TREE

Flowers hath it borne of fancy wondrous sweet,
Strange blooms that mortal tree may never bear;
Rose-tinted thoughts have drifted to my feet,
And my forgotten dreams have blossomed there.

THE BLUEBIRD

Blue as of ancient water, mountains dim
With lovely distance, see, he floats along!
Beauty of far horizon's utmost rim
Grown swift in flight and passionate in song.

THE WIND

Alive within the woodbine and the grass,
Murmuring the primal secrets of the earth,
From trembling leaf to leaf I hear it pass,
The questing spirit wind that gave me birth.

THE THRESHOLD

On this long-trodden threshold of worn pine
I sit and marvel that I marvel must,
How many another wandering soul ere mine
Hath come and gone across these lips of dust.

THE ROAD

Worn by the feet of many a passer by
Dusty, beyond my narrow gate it runs;
Then, from the hill-top to the evening sky,
To be the orbit of revolving suns.

THE FIRE ON THE HEARTH

Leaping, it kindles all my soul's desire,
Makes me bow low with hand before my face:
Upon Whose hearth burned that primordial fire,
Aflame through all the infinite of space?

PSYCHE

A woman's story, who has told aright
The tale of Psyche and her questing light?
Scored as mere vulgar questioning, her need
To know if Love, the God, were God indeed.
Scholars belittle; even poets err,
Who, one by one, in manlike wise aver
Mere curiosity, of common sort,
Impelled that search of most divine import.
Few verily who this deep tale unfold,
Have any thought how great a thing is told.
They leave unsaid, though they relate the whole,
When they forget that Psyche means the Soul.

LONG, long upon the trail the foot of man:
Age-long the growth, the strife, as, span by span,
The short lives flitted past, the race increased,
Swift generations as of bird and beast.
Long toil men knew of mountain shepherding;
Brief rest that burning noontide hours bring
Beneath the thin vine-shelter; then in cave
Or wattled hut they dwelt, while, on the wave
Their rude boats tossed; through trial and through pain
They learned to plough, to sow and reap the grain.

Ages of striving hands and muscles strained,
Something of beast outgrown, of human gained;
Hearth fires whose blue smoke-wreaths slowly creep
Up the grey rocks and mountain pathways steep;
Rude altars, and blind prayers, and groping hands
Forever reaching upward for commands
That still the dumb sky spake not; then there came
Something whose loveliness men feared to name,
All human, yet immortal in its air,
A hope made visible, an answered prayer.

White were the feet of maidens in the grass
On the green slopes of hill-strewn Thessaly,
And white their brows, but none so white as she.
From doorways far the hill-folk watched her pass
Shading their eyes meanwhile with lifted hand;
So wonderful — they might not understand.
A light shone from her; if she walked or strayed
In the deep oak or chestnut forest shade
One thought the sunlight filtered through the green.
Awed with the rest, the parent King and Queen
Drew back in fear, nor ever could divine
How they had wrought a thing so subtle-fine,

Within their reach, their touch, yet ever far
As dim-seen bird-wing, or as morning star.

Young Psyche, on the hills of Thessaly
From golden dawn to eve went far and free
A-tiptoe on the hills. The birds of spring
Answered her call in that long wandering.
Watching the flash of olive wing or blue
She started upward as in flight, and knew
The way of air that she must follow too —
Psyche the soul, aware of unseen wings,
The loveliest of all created things;
Psyche with wistful eyes and questing feet,
Her face a wonder and a waiting, here
Desire exquisite — exquisite fear,
Beauty prophetic to her forehead bring
Of destiny beyond earth's fashioning.

Through field and forest, wandered she alone,
Never a footfall chiming with her own.
For all men feared her; wooers, prudent-wise,
Faltered abashed before her praying eyes.
Too high her look; so near she seemed, yet far
She gazed beyond toward mountain peak or star;

Nor hearts were great, nor was desire meet
To match the swiftness of those pilgrim feet.
Yet men strewed garlands as she came and
went.
Blue violet and lily cup are blent
To bring the beauty of their homage; now
Stand Venus' altars empty, while men bow
In sweet, surprisèd worship, at the shrine
Of this young maiden, sudden known divine.
Wooers turned worshippers linger at the door —
The shining feet of Psyche on the floor —
Full of faint-striving reverences fine
Dim, haunting dreams of something more divine
Than their flock-girdled lives had ever brought.

With sun at dawning came a Delphic thought
(Or was it evening star shine? None can tell
What way will come Apollo's oracle) —
To Psyche's parents, bidding them repair
To some far mountain top in upper air
And leave the maiden, even as one dead,
Who with a mortal man should never wed.
Not for a hearth, earth-built, in human-wise
That flame upon the altar of her eyes.

Joyous, with marriage steps, and sound of spring,
And smitten cymbals, feet a-quivering
Went youths and maids, in long procession climbing
With sandalled feet —
The pine-trees' music with their voices chiming
In cadence sweet,
With wreath and garland singing up the slopes
Above the fears of men, above their hopes,
Sad as for burial,
Glad as for day of birth.
Oaks immemorial
Shaded their tears, their mirth,
Hope that was half misgiving;
Gentle their tread
Past grey homes of the living,
Past green homes of the dead,
Chanting in wonder, with a touch of fear
Watching the cloud land — lest a God appear.

They meet the mountain silence; eagles grey
Soar past grey summit rocks: they steal away
As great Apollo bade, and leave her there
Her young heart throbbing in the luminous air,
Until a Power came and swept her high —

Was it her own wings breaking suddenly?
The way of winds she went athwart the sky —
Of floating leaf or seed; surprisèd found
A palace of the gods, encompassed round
With tall, enfolding trees; made musical
By murmur of the splashing fountain's fall,
A spot of shadowed beauty, fresh with flowers,
Starring young grass grown green in spring's first
hours.
On sweet stringed instruments the breezes played;
And Psyche, wondering, yet unafraid,
Was served by lovely voices, shadowy hands
Unseen, untouched, fulfilling her commands.

The midnight air, the whispering leaves. astir
With expectation, gently circle her
Until — but who dare tell of how Love came
Invisible, yet beautiful as flame,
And terrible beyond all human fear
Though yet divinely dear,
Who wooed and won her in the veilèd dark;
Exquisite joy of very love, and hark!
The silence peopled with soft murmuring things,
Ripple of water, stir of insect wings,

Spring piping from the shaded pools — ah me,
Psyche, the soul, blinded with ecstasy!

The drifting days, the nights were poignant sweet
Waiting the coming of Love's silent feet
Through hours of gracious silence, while the breeze
Stirred the deep foliage of o'ershadowing trees.
High was the house of Love, and, reaching far
Out to the confines of the evening star
His wide dominion; Psyche's watching eyes
Followed the mystic wings of butterflies
That fluttered past the fountain in the sun,
Till lengthened shadows told the day was done;
Then, through the gathering dusk, came faint star
beams,
And ministering voices round her dreams.

Psyche, in Love's warm nest, from perfect sleep
Awoke to perfect wondering. This deep
Annihilating joy that Love had wrought,
Through her long questing was it this she sought?
This Love, that shadow was, and flame,
Love that in darkness went and came,
Love, in whom god and mortal met,

Hereon, from childhood, had her young heart set
Its utmost longing? Love, which thrilled her so
Wakened the deep necessity to know.

Spring was astir in Thessaly, in flush
Of delicate blossom, song of lark and thrush
And fresh grass growing; tender leaflets spoke
The dim rejoicing at the heart of oak
And gnarled apple; now young Psyche went
Swift-footed, in high quest, her purpose bent
To find the face of Love; night after night,
A lamp within her hand, a gleam of light
Upon her forehead, from the flame, wind-blown,
By shadowed fountain, and green mossy stone,
In that old garden, sweet with blossoming
Of all that quickened in Thessalian spring,
She sought; the stars from heaven lent their aid,
The slender moon, to keep her unafraid
Mid deep o'erhanging trees. By day the flame
In far sun-smitten branch or fern became
The torch to guide her steps. Along the hills,
She searched by light of shining daffodils
Or wing of butterfly, wherever gleams
Of gold, in quiet water or swift streams

Recalled the radiance of this thing of fire
That yearned into her with a god's desire.

Blame ye not her for questing to and fro;
She was a spirit and she needs must know
If this mysterious lover, awful, dear
Beyond imagining, were rightly here,
Lord of her life, Master of house and soul.
As, night or day, by wood and stream she stole
With look, with motion as of lifted wings,
The most bewildered of all living things,
The very gods might bend from out the skies
To read the questioning in Psyche's eyes —
That beauty blent of earth's and heaven's best,
The two flames, of the hearth and of the quest.

There came a tragic moment men have told
With blame of Psyche from far days of old:
Midnight, and dark; a lamp held high above
The beauty of the sleeping face of Love —
Lo Psyche, priestess at Life's altar, stands,
Stern as a god, a knife within her hands,
Ready to slay this most beloved guest
Prove his seen face unworthy of her quest.

Antigone, Alcestis from old days,
Iphigenia still win meed of praise,
For lofty sacrifice, yet who hath ruth
On one who ventured more than life for truth,
Love's perfect self, offered in sacrifice,
Prove it unmeet the vision in her eyes?
Disgrace upon the old romancing band
Filled with men's fear, lest women understand!
Long cried the poets, shame! ignoring so
The essence of the soul — the need to know.

Soft light shone out from Psyche's lamp, then fled
All fear from her forever; on that bed
Love's perfect self in perfect beauty lay,
Beauty more golden than the golden ray
That glorified his face, and Psyche gazed
Trancèd in high content, when lo! he raised
The splendor of his head with moaning call;
A burning drop the gleaming lamp let fall
Upon his shoulder; foot to forehead flushed
With sudden anger; soft white wings uprushed
Through new-found darkness, and the delicate wing
That brushed the cheek of Psyche brought the
sting

Of wrathful parting, though the touch was light
As of white moth upon a still June night.
Anguished, enfevered, until morning grey
Stretched on the floor bereavèd Psyche lay
Beneath the window whence Love fled away,
All the night-music discord; note of bird
Half-wakened, chirping when the nestlings stirred,
The sweet mysterious piping out of tune,
Vanished the stars, cloud-veiled the waning moon;
The darkest shadow of that darkest night
That Love proved less than Love in fearing light
And less than Love in leaving her alone.

When with the dawn a beam of sunlight shone
Upon the pine tops, Psyche rose and left
That charmèd threshold, desolate, bereft,
Forth from the golden-pillared house to quest
By wood and mountain in divine unrest,
Love's pilgrim henceforth. One clear morning star
White in the dawning, beckoned her afar.
With feet unsandalled, dusky hair unbound,
Where the trail beckoned, or the river wound
Through forest shadow, where the west wind lent
Its wayward guidance, lonely Psyche went;

Where moth wings beckoned, or the streamlets
ran
Through reeds and rushes of the realm of Pan
Untiring. Once, in dim, recessèd place,
She caught a glimpse, ah, the unwonted grace!
A fleeting glimpse of his rough, kindly face.
Like wrinkling water on a sunlit stream,
His smile ironic, mingled with her dream,
Revealed to her that immemorial age
Guessed the deep secret of her pilgrimage.
So sought she to regain, were life the cost,
The perfect face of Love, once seen, and lost.

A temple, golden-white in clearest air,
Stood on a mountain top, and Ceres fair
With lovely look expectant waited there,
Her laugh like wind abroad in young spring wheat;
Sad Psyche, falling at the goddess' feet
Vowed service, for the kindness of that face.
Though spent with weariness, she toiled to place
The heaps of grain and ears in order due;
Sickle and scythe and rake she gently drew
From out confusion, standing them a-row.
Then Ceres touched her shoulder, bending so

As she would bend to touch Proserpine's hair;
Gave her best counsel; Psyche must repair
To Venus' temple, and must there submit
To punishment the Cyprian might think fit
For one who wounded Eros; all the will
Of Venus she must do; yet Ceres still
Long when this childlike, white, appealing thing
Had vanished in the distant green of spring
Stood by her portal, pondering in surprise
The doubt and question in sweet Psyche's eyes.

Gold-crowned is angry Venus, and she waits
By all the splendor of her temple gates
Whence gleam deep Tyrian purple, gorgeous red.
Fast fall her taunts upon the bended head
Of Psyche, faithless and undutiful,
Who injured Eros, whose base heart is full
Of mean ingratitude. No punishment
Could ever match her trespass' full extent.
Exiled henceforth from love and lover, she
Through every spring Dame Venus' drudge must be.

So Venus; yet the goddess fails to brook
The wearied pilgrim's high-uplifted look.

There stand the two at gaze, and, all unseen
The race of humankind awaits between
Its destiny. Perfect, of flesh opaque,
The Cyprian stands, in jealousy awake
To this reproach of finer beauty, now
Transfiguring sweet Psyche's youthful brow
As light that gleams within, and bitter hate
Flames round that altar where no wooers wait.
Grass-grown the pathway leading to her door
Where all the sons of men had flocked before.

Now Venus into deeper fury flies
For stigma of those unregarding eyes
That seek, beyond, the far horizon when
Her own eyes ever seek the eyes of men,
Drawing them toward her; never hath she grace
For any look diverted from her face.
Psyche, who speaks no word, for all her pain
Is made to sort a heap of mingled grain
Of vetches, millet, barley, wheat, and corn,
Through gusty days wherein the year is born.

Dim groping at the sunless heart of earth,
A quickening of ancient roots, new birth

Of grass and flowers: lo! from twig to twig
Leaps the swift flame of life; the buds grow big
Till green sheaths burst; gently, on Psyche's throat
Flutter the winds of spring; each soft bird note
Thrills through her fingers, busy with the seed
That quiver, fain to grow; she strives to read
The riddle of the earth, when April brings
This secret stirring at the heart of things;
Becomes herself the springtime, in young roots
Cool-creeping earthward, and enkindling shoots
Of willow-tree and poplar; even so
As millet and as barley seed must grow,
Piercing beneath the surface, warm with sun,
To the far depths where birth and death are one —
Lost in the poignant joy, pain-touched, of all
Who follow spring-time's immemorial call:
Soft murmurs, glad desire everywhere,
April triumphant in the sunlit air;
Who shall recount the meaning of this thing
When Soul is made to sort the seeds of spring?

Psyche, with mingled seeds in her white hands,
Watches the temple gate where Venus stands,
Waiting the issue; pain and wonder strive

In the sweet eyes where hope is still alive,
Spite of bewilderment, of criss-cross thread
In life's too subtle web. Her utter dread
Of punishment she voices in a cry
Knowing her failure; one who wandered by
Invisible, Love's very self, gave ear,
And sent the ants to succor. All may hear
But who may understand the secret thought
That the old poet here in beauty wrought,
Making the least of nature's creatures know
The wisdom hid from mortals? To and fro
They sped in toil; the grain, by set of sun,
Was piled in heaps, the goddess' bidding done;
And Psyche, with the sunshine on her hair
Watching, laughed out, wafting a little prayer
Of thankfulness to him who sent them there.

Now on Dame Venus rest eternal scorn
Who, in the burning of a summer morn,
Called Psyche to her for a hard behest,
More soul-endangering than all the rest.
Silent, with head down-cast, affrighted, meek
She went out trembling, for she needs must seek
The golden shining rams beyond the stream

And bring gold fleece to Venus. As in dream,
The spring look on her brow, athwart the heat
She passed. The dry grass crackled 'neath her
feet;
Hot glowed the meadow, and the noontide glare
Burned like consuming fire. The summer air
Leaped up in flame about her. Through the fires
Of the fierce sun awakening fierce desires
She passed, and trembled at the water's edge,
White as some slender birch that one might think
Enrooted there. On subtle mischief bent
The Cyprian triumphed in this punishment.
Now horn and hoof should mar that loveliness
That mocked her earth-worn beauty by its dress
Of snowy innocence. Yet lo! the reeds,
Swaying marsh grasses, tangled water weeds,
Whispered a message in soft murmuring
The gentle river god had bade them bring.
"Wait till these creatures slumber in the shade;
Then you may cross and gather unafraid
The shining fleece from bush and bramble." So
She did as they had bidden. Rippling slow
About her slender ankles in the shade
The little wavelets whispered: "Unafraid

Pass on white feet, and come again, unharmed."
Breathless she ventured, quivering, alarmed;
The fierce heat scorched her, but she kept her quest,
And, bravely daring, passed unscathed the test
Set by base Venus for her swift betraying;
The noonday heat, the golden rams waylaying
Her virgin footsteps, raging with desire
To trample all her whiteness in the mire.
She brought the fleece, returning, and as fair
As erstwhile shone her forehead, though her hair
Burned on her brow; the breeze that went and came
The very river ripples turned to flame.

The tale is long; wayfaring day by day
By night she slept where breeze-blown branches sway.
In lonely woodland glens she watched the race
Of frightened satyrs, scudding from her face.
She feared them, yet she feared not horn nor hoof,
But touched her hand and forehead, dreading proof
Of too close kinship; if perchance one ran
In friendly wise beside, she bent to scan
Her own pure face in pool or wandering brook
Fearful of finding there the satyr look.

The pilgrim aye, by rocky way and steep
Toiled with spent breath the hard behests to keep
Of cruel Venus; to her face there passed
The beauty of keen pain; and unsurpassed
Became her loveliness in suffering.
The sharp stones cut her feet; the nettles sting
In solitary paths. In each new plight
She shone from out herself with clearer light,
Transfigured fine became her mortal flesh
Holding her spirit lightly in thin mesh.
The loneliness, the cruel toil became
Part of her starry radiance, like a flame
Blown by the wind to beauty strange and sweet;
And every scar upon her shining feet
Was swift transmuted into subtle charm,
While angry Venus, plotting further harm,
Furrowed her brow in jealous wonderment,
For each new torment that the goddess sent
Grew exquisite in Psyche; wearied flesh
To Venus was but beauty marred. Afresh,
Her rosy fingers on her blooming cheek,
She sent her barbèd thoughts broadcast to seek
New torments for the marring of the soul.
Nor tongue could tell, nor pen recount the whole

Long story of her suffering; every net
For her ensnaring by the fowler set
She broke, escaping; though she passed, unblest,
White doors of temples opening on the west,
Or trod wet sands upon the curving shore,
She thought not on her torment, for before
Her waiting eyes, in sparkle and in light
Of rippling waves, beckoned the vision bright
Of Love's face, shining through that anguished
night.

Who knows the mind of Eros through these days,
Whither he wandered, by what darkened ways
His white wings fluttered? Lonely paths he went
His mind a marvel, puzzling what it meant
That he had feared the gaze of Psyche's eyes.
Those saddened hours when Love grew slowly wise
Are unrecorded; one may but surmise
That Love through anguish won an added grace
Since that far hour when Psyche searched his face.
Whether far woodland, or sequestered stream
Or breaking sea-wave brought the greater dream
The old tale saith not; but I half divine
Where, near or far, the feet of Psyche shine,

Treading the thorny path, her white limbs rent,
Love watches, grieving at her punishment,
Sharing each pang, partaking of the whole
Sharp chastisement of the long-questing soul.

Still burning in the flame that will not die,
Of jealousy, Dame Venus set a task
Harder than all the others; she would spy
Upon the secrets of the dead, would ask
Persephone to share her beauty fine,
And subtler than the Cyprian could divine.
Venus, whose beauty lasted but an hour,
Swift as the sea-foam, as the fading flower,
Brooding in thought, striving in vain to guess
The secret of that shadowed loveliness
Of Proserpine, goddess at once of death
And of the quickening breath
Of all things greening in the joy of spring,
Bade Psyche seek the underworld, to bring
This secret beauty treasured in her hand
Sealed in a casket. The august command
Psyche obeyed, head bent in reverence.
Long league on league alone she wandered thence,
And, journeying by distant, shadowed ways,

By far horizons, through the dim blue haze
Of autumn and Demeter's robe she went,
Where earth's faint rim and heaven's rim are blent.
Her white feet trod to Erebus' dark realm;
A shadowy oarsman sat beside her helm
On that dusk river at earth's utmost edge
Where all feet pause. Steering through reed and sedge
In silence Charon ferried her across
The flood that laves all mortal pain and loss,
Whose murmuring secret waters pass
The green of never-springing grass.
Trailing her fingers in grey Lethe's streams
Soft peace came to her, and forgotten dreams.

Who can grasp the whole
Vision of that old poet, who first set
Young Psyche's feet, Psyche, the questing soul,
Upon the pathway undiscovered yet,
Beyond heart-beat and breath,
To search out Love and Death
And bring the beauty of eternity
Back for the eyes of earthly love to see?
— Some dreaming Greek, for whom these stories old

Of elder gods, by priest and grandsire told,
Still wore their rainbow beauty, while the ray
Of white faith, shining from a fairer day,
Touched all the heaven to glory. Loveliness
Worn by no other legend is the dress
This mystic story wears; here, face to face,
Greek soul and Christian meet in long embrace.
Listening breathless lean we here to catch
Its utmost meaning; here, upon the latch
Of a great door about to open, rests
The finger of antiquity, where quests
Fair Psyche, dreaming at the end of things,
With outstretched hands and half-uplifted wings.

Searching lost pathways by the secret streams
The pilgrim soul threaded the realm of dreams
Past the dim poplars of the shadowed land;
There silvery willows stood on either hand,
Silently watching where faint shadows fell
Upon the glimmering fields of asphodel.
Then Psyche, bending forward, strove to reach
Of ever-murmuring leaves the mystic speech;
Over and over, lest she should forget,
They whispered: "Farther search; you win not yet

The loveliness of Proserpine, who waits
Beyond the myriads thronging her wide gates,
On her dream throne far in the land of dream."
The pilgrim ventured onward, without gleam
Of sun or starlight; none there be who tell
In mortal speech, what mystery befell
When Psyche questioned death; yet, when she turned
To find her earthward way, a casket burned
Within her hand, with arabesque and fret
Subtly enwrought, with precious jewels set,
Mysterious treasure, gleaming through the night,
Within, ah, who dare speak? the hidden light
Of beauty, lifted high
Above the thought or dream of men who die.
Beauty eternal, ultimate, divine,
Crowning long quest and all adventure fine.

Now chide her not, ye listeners, chide her not,
Psyche, who, turning from that shadowed spot
The casket in her hand, wherein lay hid
The beauty of Persephone, though bid
By many warning voices not to look
Upon the treasured secret, failed to brook

Such admonition, loosed the fastening
Fearful of naught that knowledge full could bring.
High was her courage; hers the right to peer
For shall death be, and shall the soul know fear?
Onward she passes, homeward, with feet slow
And lovely on the greening ways; now blow
The little winds of earth about her hair;
Now daffodil and windflower, growing there
Near to earth's utmost edge, are trembling
To share the hidden message she may bring —
Four-footed creatures, creeping to her side
Beg with soft eyes to throw the casket wide.

Of the deep sleep that fell upon the Soul
When from the opened box there flew the whole
Of death's dark secret, of the wakening
When Love himself sped thither with swift wing
To rescue Psyche, dare I not to sing.
Though vision of mere mortal may not go
Beyond this ancient tale of utmost woe
Suffered by Psyche, of the bitter cost
Of knowledge, of the pathway found and lost,
A deeper wisdom still it whispereth
When Love wakes Psyche from the sleep of death.

Soundless the wings of eagles, sweeping far
Above Olympus, where the great gods are;
Silent the moving clouds that, to and fro
Traverse blue heaven in procession slow.
Cloud-guarded stand the gateways of that height;
The clear air pulsates in long beams of light
Where green fades to blue distance; silent pass
The sandalled feet of gods athwart the grass.
Shimmer of doves' soft necks, of peacocks' wings,
Hints awful presence; while the soft air brings
Echo of half-heard voices; here a beam
Of young Apollo's light; and many a gleam
Of god-like face or limb; Athena's spear,
Flutter of Hermes' feet: the gods are here!

Unheralded, up from the land of death,
White-winged Eros sped with quick-drawn breath
Through the cloud portal, where the seasons wait.
Brown, lovely Summer, guardian of the gate,
With sleepy Winter, and with dreaming Spring
He brushed aside with swift, impatient wing,
And wise-eyed Autumn, with her chastened hands,
Dropping her many-colored leaves on lands
Faint, far beneath. About them, unafraid,

With quick, white feet the child-like Hours played,
And started in pursuit; he pushed away
Their clinging hands, impatient of delay.
Rushed to the knees of Zeus, and all the air
Quivered, as Eros quivered forth his prayer
For Psyche. Hera, sad Mnemosyne,
Venus, Athena, all great gods that be
Before Zeus' golden-portalled house are met
In solemn conclave, high above them set
Zeus, thunderer. The silence of the cloud,
Voiced their high meaning; need to speak aloud
Exists not on Olympus, for the wind
Or stir of tree-tops speaks the immortal mind.

Swift as Zeus' lightning sped his messenger,
Hermes, the winged-footed, down for her
But lately wakened from a death-like sleep.
Upsoared the twain together, through the deep
Blue empyrean. Psyche's opening eyes
Gazed on Olympus in a vast surprise,
On Venus' softened face, Athena's look,
The awful calm of Zeus; she swiftly took
The outstretched hands of Eros; winged as one
They mounted to Zeus' feet, Olympus won.

To Zeus spake Eros: "Spite her questioning
I beg you make this lovely mortal thing
Immortal with us"; so he made excuse.
Then, with such gesture as the great gods use
Spake Zeus, from out his high, uplifted place, —
Reading deep wisdom in Athena's face —
"Nay, not in spite of that which you have done,
Sacrifice offered, and hard knowledge won;
Because you ventured life and love to know,
We grant you goddess, and we crown you so.
By virtue of high courage, fine intent,
By all the torture of the ways you went
In doing Venus' bidding, by the breath
That dared to venture on the ways of death,
Held the deep purpose, kept the soul's behest,
Made Love a portion of the endless quest,
We make you here immortal." Who can tell
The joy on high Olympus, what befell
Of godlike laughter in that golden light,
When to the waiting gods came Psyche, bright
With inward radiance? There was sweetest playing,
Music of wind and finger, Orpheus straying.

Peace lay on Psyche's brow, and in her eyes
Brooded a deeper peace; yet no surprise

Lurked there. In all the paths of earth
That she had trodden, though of mortal birth
She knew herself immortal; bending low
She kissed the face, long searched for, to and fro,
In anguish sought, by bitter suffering won —
Eros, no longer mere Dame Venus' son
But one with Psyche, in immortal quest,
Begun, when first, o'er her beloved guest
She held her lamp; pursued through darkened ways.
Now hath she won Love's face for endless gaze;
So crown the gods her long endeavor high,
So consecrate the paths she wandered by.
Would they have welcomed Psyche, had they known
This meant the abdication of their throne?

Though she walked softly with them, ever far
She gazed beyond at distant cloud or star,
Still following a quest should never cease,
Beyond the wisdom of the gods of Greece.
For her, a greater dream than all their dreams;
Through beauty, a profounder beauty gleams;
Through all earth's music a diviner call —
Psyche, the one immortal of them all.

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